

PROTECTING AMERICAN STEEL

HON. KEN LUCAS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, America's steel industry has been hit by an unprecedented flood of low-priced, imported steel. As a member of the bipartisan Congressional Steel Caucus, I have become increasingly frustrated as I have watched this flood of low-priced imports force our steel producers to either slow production or close up shop. That is why I was pleased by the Administration's recent decision to heed the advice of the Congressional Steel Caucus and the pleas of the steel industry by initiating an investigation under Section 201 of the Fair Trade Act of 1974. On Friday, June 22, 2001, U.S. Trade Representative, Robert Zoellick requested the International Trade Commission (ITC) to begin that investigation.

Pursuing a Section 201 means that we will now investigate the illegal dumping of foreign steel into our marketplace. If the investigation finds that unfair trade practices were used by foreign countries in the United States, we will be entitled to seek relief from imported steel—including imposing punitive tariffs and trade restrictions. This investigation is a step in the right direction. It puts foreign steel producers on notice that we will not simply stand by while unfairly subsidized steel imports leave our steel plants idle and our steelworkers without work. But we need to do more.

Over 15,000 steelworkers nationwide have lost their jobs due to the current industry crisis. Since 1997, at least 18 steel companies have filed for bankruptcy. The health insurance of 70,000 steel-company retirees is now in jeopardy—that's 70,000 Americans faced with losing health care coverage precisely at the time in their life when they can afford it the least. Although a Section 201 investigation must report its findings within 120 days, the ITC can take up to a year to figure out how to respond to unfair trade practices. America's steel industry needs relief now. Simply put, Congress needs to enact the Steel Revitalization Act of 200, H.R. 808. And the President needs to sign it.

This bill directs the President to impose quotas, tariff surcharges, or other measures on imports. Among other things, it requires the President to negotiate enforceable, voluntary export restraint agreements. And the Steel Revitalization Act takes care of those who have suffered most from the current situation—the steelworkers who have lost their jobs. The bill establishes programs, such as the Steelworker Retiree Health Care Fund, to help these workers take care of their families. This fund would be accessible by all steel companies to provide health insurance to qualified retirees. The measures included in the Steel Revitalization Act would help families throughout Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District, from Shelby to Boyd Counties, who depend on our domestic steel industry for their livelihood.

Our steelworkers work hard to ensure that quality American steel girds our growing communities. That's why I, along with 220 other members of Congress, have cosponsored the Steel Revitalization Act. I am determined to keep our domestic producers in this important industry from falling victim to unfair trade with

foreign nations. Along with the Section 201 investigation, the Steel Revitalization Act would go a long way toward ensuring that steel remains a vital industry in Kentucky and the nation.

PASSAGE OF ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL

HON. TED STRICKLAND

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank our Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking Member for the hard work they put into this bill, which includes a number of programs that are very important to Southern Ohio. I would like to take this opportunity to comment on these Department of Energy programs that directly affect the workers and communities supporting the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant located in Piketon, Ohio.

First, I would like to express my support for the \$110,784,000 included in the Fiscal Year 2002 Energy and Water Appropriations bill for costs associated with winterization of the Portsmouth, Ohio Gaseous Diffusion Plant and maintaining the plant on cold standby. It was just over a year ago today that the United States Enrichment Corporation, Inc. (USEC) announced that it would close the only U.S. uranium enrichment plant capable of meeting industry's nuclear fuel specifications. While I cannot overstate my disagreement, disappointment and disgust with that decision, I am pleased that funding will be available in Fiscal Year 2002 to ensure that the Portsmouth facility remains in a cold standby condition so that it could be restarted if needed in the future. I have been assured by the Department of Energy that the funding levels in this year's appropriations bill will allow the Department to meet its goals as announced in Columbus, Ohio on March 1, 2001 and as stated by then Governor Bush last October.

I am aware of report language accompanying the bill which discusses the non-proliferation programs with Russia and, specifically, the Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Agreement. I support this incredibly important foreign policy initiative and I agree with the language calling for the Russian HEU to "be reduced as quickly as possible." I am also aware that the purchase of the 500 metric tons of Russian HEU has not always stayed on schedule, and I support exploring ways to accelerate the purchase of the downblended weapons grade material from Russia. However, I would hope that we can accelerate this program without adversely affecting the domestic uranium enrichment industry. Today, we are dependent upon this downblended Russian HEU for approximately 50 percent of our domestic nuclear fuel supply. Increasing that dependence makes no sense to me, particularly at a time when we are debating a national energy strategy calling for greater energy security in order to avoid price volatility and supply uncertainty. We must act in a manner that strikes a reasonable balance between this significant foreign policy objective and the need to maintain a reliable and economic source of domestic nuclear fuel.

I am disappointed that the Department of Energy's Worker and Community Transition

Office funding falls short of the President's request. I am deeply concerned that the allocated funding is inadequate to address the needs of the Department of Energy workers and communities across the DOE complex who depend on these funds to help minimize the social and economic impacts resulting from the changes in the Department of Energy's mission.

Finally, but not least of all, I am concerned about the slight reduction in the funding for the Department of Energy's Environment, Safety and Health Office. I am hopeful that this reduction will not impact the extremely important medical monitoring program at the Portsmouth plant, which also serves to screen past and present workers at other sites throughout the DOE complex. I am hopeful that these funds will be restored as the bill moves through the conference committee. We now know that many workers at DOE sites, including the one in Piketon, Ohio, handled hazardous and radioactive materials with little knowledge and, oftentimes, with inadequate safety practices. In fact, a May 2000 report issued by the Department's Office of Oversight on the Piketon Gaseous Diffusion Plant states, "Due to weaknesses in monitoring programs, such as the lack of extremity monitoring, exposure limits may have unknowingly been exceeded. In addition, communication of hazards, the rationale for and use of protective measures, accurate information about radiation exposure, and the enforcement of protective equipment use were inadequate. Further, workers were exposed to various chemical hazards for which adverse health effects had not yet been identified." Scaling back the medical monitoring program now would be unconscionable knowing what we know today. Furthermore, the compensation program established last fall by passage of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), designed to compensate employees made ill by the work they performed for the government, would be weakened if workers are then denied access to medical screening. Although the EEOICPA is not a perfect bill, it would be a shame to hobble a long overdue program before it is even out of the gate.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ED SMITH

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask today to honor Ed Smith, a true hero, on behalf of Congress. Ed served as the Centennial football coach, as school district administrator, and he served as a model for how to win, how to lose graciously, and how never to give in. He was also a man devoted to his family up until his recent death just months before his 100th birthday.

Professionally, Ed was revered by his colleagues. Central coach, principal and teacher John Rivas told Loretta Sword of The Pueblo Chieftain, "He was the godfather of it all, you might say, and he was always there to help me if I had a problem or a situation I didn't have a handle on." Ms. initiative helped ensure that the Dutch Clark Stadium had the financial and community support necessary to be built. Also, he made certain that the annual All-Star